United Nations S/2007/640

Security Council

Distr.: General
30 October 2007

Original: English

Letter dated 29 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to confirm to you that, during the presidency of the Republic of Indonesia, an open debate on the topic "The role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security" will be held in the Security Council, on 6 November 2007, chaired by N. Hassan Wirajuda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

The Indonesian Mission has prepared a concept paper to help guide the discussion on that occasion (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) R. M. Marty M. **Natalegawa**
Ambassador/Permanent Representative

07-57254 (E) 311007

Annex to the letter dated 29 October 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The role of regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security

Indonesia's concept paper

Introduction

1. Consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations has been recognized as key in the promotion of international peace and security.

2. Over the years, there has been a plethora of efforts in promotion of such an objective, including through the adoption of Security Council resolution 1631 (2005). However, the ever-increasing burden of expectation placed on the Security Council to discharge its mandate relating to its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and stability, coupled with the enhancement of the capacity of various regional and subregional organizations in the aforementioned areas, suggest it is important to ensure the most optimal complementary relations.

3. In this connection, as part of its presidency of the Security Council, on 6 November 2007, Indonesia intends to initiate a thematic debate in the Council focusing on the current potential and capacities of regional and subregional organizations to promote regional order and to contribute to the work of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Objectives

4. The thematic debate has two principal objectives:

- First, to provide information on the potential and existing capacities of regional and subregional organizations in the field of peace and security, covering, inter alia, the spectrum of promotion of dialogue and confidence-building, norms-shaping and sharing, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding in their respective regions;

- Secondly, to promote the identification and further development of modalities which enhance the contribution of regional and subregional organizations to the work of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security.

5. In other words, the thematic debate would be anchored on the premise that regional and subregional organizations, consistent with the provisions of the Charter, could contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security directly, by building and developing their capacities in dealing with threats to those objectives in their respective regions, as well as indirectly, by contributing to the Council's discharge of its Charter-mandated responsibilities.

Background

6. The end of the Cold War and the coming of the twenty-first century signalled enhanced recognition of the relevance of regional organizations to United Nations activities, including in the maintenance of international peace and security. Developments in the last decade have been especially pertinent.

7. In 1992, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's report entitled "An agenda for peace" (A/47/277-S/24111) brought the potential impact of regional organizations to light and contended that these organizations possessed the potential to be used for preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding. The Secretary-General, inter alia, noted that while the Security Council would continue to have primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, "regional action as a matter of decentralization, delegation and cooperation with United Nations efforts could not only lighten the burden of the Council, but also contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs".

8. The utility of regional organizations in peace and security over the next decade was found in conflict management and post-conflict stabilization processes in debates in the Security Council (see S/2005/638). The presidential statement (S/PRST/2004/27) issued at the 5007th meeting of the Council acknowledged the important role that can be played by regional organizations in the prevention, resolution and management of conflicts, including by addressing their root causes. A second statement (S/PRST/2004/44) dealt specifically with measures to strengthen the Council's relationship with the African Union.

9. In October 2005, the Security Council adopted resolution 1631 (2005), which for the first time, outlines a coherent guideline for enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. While recognizing the growing contribution made by those organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security, it underlines the Council's commitment to taking appropriate steps towards the further development of cooperation between the United Nations and those organizations. It, inter alia, recommends better communication between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations and reiterates the obligation of regional organizations under Article 54 of the Charter to keep the Council fully informed of their activities in the maintenance of international peace and security.

10. In September 2006, a presidential statement (S/PRST/2006/39) revisited the issue of regional organizations in peace and security, espousing the benefits of closer cooperation with regional and subregional organizations on peace and security issues, including the brokering of peace agreements in conflict situations.

11. In March 2007, the Security Council again took up the issue of regional cooperation, particularly with respect to the African Union (see S/PRST/2007/7). It welcomed the November 2006 signing of the Declaration on Enhancing United Nations-African Union Cooperation between the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union in the field of international peace and security (A/61/630, annex) and urged cooperation with the relevant regional and subregional bodies regarding conflict resolution in Africa to support regional early warning and mediation, risk assessment and illegal exploitation and trafficking in natural resources.

12. Outside the Security Council, engagement by the United Nations with regional organizations is also strong. Since 1994, the Secretary-General has regularly convened high-level meetings between the United Nations and regional and other intergovernmental organizations. In the General Assembly, a number of regional organizations have been granted observer status, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the League of Arab States, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, the East African Community, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States, the European Community, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Andean Community and the Association of Caribbean States.

13. While existing regional and subregional players in all continents have different levels of development, both in terms of institutions and the scope of cooperation, they each have great potential to contribute to the work of the Security Council. This has been proven, inter alia, by the role that the European Union plays in Europe and beyond, the African Union in Africa, the Arab League in the Middle East, OAS in the Americas and ASEAN in South-East Asia.

Areas to be explored

14. Bearing in mind the aforementioned background, it is suggested that deliberation in the Security Council thematic debate will focus, inter alia, on the following points:

- What are the current capacities of regional and subregional organizations in the spectrum of promotion of dialogue and confidence-building, norms-shaping and sharing, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding?
- How can best practices and lessons learned drawn from the experiences of various regional and subregional organizations be shared and developed and made useful in the efforts to address local disputes?
- To what extent are initiatives of general application to all regional institutions and to what extent will policies and programmes need to be tailored to different regions individually?
- What are the opportunities and challenges for the enhancement of communication between the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations?
- How can we stimulate a more comprehensive engagement of regional organizations in the efforts of the United Nations in conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding?
- In terms of peacekeeping, would a hybrid model be applicable to all conflicts and regions? What are its strengths and limitations?

Format and outcome

15. The thematic debate will be held in an open debate format at the ministerial level. Participation of United Nations Members outside the Security Council and representatives of regional and subregional organizations is very much encouraged. The debate is anticipated to produce a presidential statement that sums up the broad views of the Council on the need to enhance the contribution of regional organizations to the work of the Council.